

## Message Text

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EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 CIEP-01 OMB-01 AID-05 AGR-05

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R 171005Z SEP 76

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2123

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, BG, IN, ECON, EAGR, EIND

SUBJ: BDG WHITE PAPER ON FARAKKA: MISSION COMMENTS

REF: (A) DACCA 4798, (B) DACCA A-110 SEPTEMBER 17, (C) DACCA  
A-49, MAY 14, (D) DACCA A-34, APRIL 23

1. SUMMARY: THE FACTUAL DATA IN THE BDG WHITE PAPER ON THE ADVERSE ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF INDIAN DIVERSION OF GANGES RIVER WATER OF FARAKKA ARE DOUBTLESS ACCURATE, BUT CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING THE EXTENT AND SERIOUSNESS OF THOSE EFFECTS ARE EXAGGERATED. THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS, PARTICULARLY FROM INCREASED SALINITY, ARE REAL AND ADVERSE, BUT LIMITED IN GEOGRAPHIC AREA AND APPEAR TO US UNLIKELY TO PROVE CUMULATIVE. END SUMMARY.

2. THE BDG WHITE PAPER ON THE GANGES WATER DISPUTE WITH INDIA, DESCRIBED REFTEL A AND TRANSMITTED REPAIR B, ARGUES THAT THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF THE INDIAN DIVERSION OF WATER FROM THE GANGES AT FARAKKA ELEVEN MILES FROM  
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THE BANGLADESH BORDER ARE IMMEDIATE, OF CRISIS PROPOR-

TIONS AND POSE "BASICALLY A HUMAN PROBLEM RELATED TO THE SURVIVAL OF MILLIONS" OF BANGLADESHIS. IN FORMING OUR JUDGMENTS ON THE ECONOMIC FINDINGS IN THIS PAPER, WE HAVE DRAWN ON THE SOURCES IDENTIFIED IN REPAIR C, INCLUDING DISCUSSIONS WITH THE IBRD MISSION AGRICULTURAL/WATER RESOURCES OFFICER. THIS MESSAGE COMMENTS ON THE BDG ARGUMENTS CONCERNING THESE ECONOMIC EFFECTS WHICH ENCOMPASS IN THE BDG VIEW AGRICULTURE, IRRIGATION, FISHERIES, FORESTRY, NAVIGATION, INDUSTRY, HEALTH

AND ECOLOGY. OUR FINDINGS GENERALLY PARALLEL THE CONCLUSIONS TRANSMITTED BY REPAIR GRANO C AND D.

3. CONCLUSION ARE BELIEVED ACCURATE. WE HAVE NO REASON

TO DOUBT THE MEASUREMENTS OF RIVER FLOWS, RIVER DEPTHS, OR SALINITY. ALTHOUGH IT IS POSSIBLE SOME HAVE BEEN "COOKED," WE HAVE NO REPORTS OR EVIDENCE THEY HAVE BEEN. HOWEVER, SUCH DATA AS FISH LANDINGS AND PRICES WOULD BE HIGHLY SUBJECT TO THE SELECTION OF THE FIGURES ACTUALLY USED FROM THE DATA AVAILABLE.

4. GEOGRAPHICALLY LIMITED. THE WHITE PAPER ARGUES THAT THE ENTIRE SOUTHWEST QUADRANT OF BANGLADESH (INCLUDING PORTIONS OF TWO DISTRICTS NORTH OF THE GANGES) IS "DEPENDENT ON GANGES WATER" AND HENCE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY WITHDRAWAL OF WATER FROM THAT RIVER DURING THE WINTER /SPRING "DRY SEASON." THIS ASSERTION IS HIGHLY EXAGGERATED. THE BRAHMAPUTRA FLOWS THROUGH THE RICE BOWL EASTERN DISTRICTS OF BARISAL AND PATUAKHALI, BELOW ITS CONFLUENCES BOTH WITH THE GANGES WEST OF DACCA AND WITH THE MEGHNA SOUTH AS TO ENTIRELY NEGATE ANY DRY-SEASON DROP IN GANGES' FLOW. FOR EXAMPLE, THE IBRD MISSIONS EARLY CONCERNS ABOUT POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECTS IN THE AREA OF THEIR IRRIGATION PROJECT IN BARISAL DISTRICT PROVED UNFOUNDED. THUS, TWO OF THE SIX DISTRICTS IN SOUTHWEST QUADRANT ARE QUITE UNAFFECTED. SIMILARLY, THE SUNDERBANS TIDAL FOREST RESERVE IN KHULNA DISTRICT RECEIVES MUCH OF ITS WATER FROM RIVERS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RISING IN EASTERN INDIA WHOLLY SEPARATE FROM THE GANGES. IN OUR VIEW THE AREA AFFECTED WOULD BE A FAIRLY BROAD SWATH ON THE SOUTHERN SIDE OF THE GANGES AND A NARROWER ONE ON THE NORTHERN SIDE UP TO ITS CONFLUENCE WITH THE BRAHMAPUTRA AND FAIRLY BROAD SWATH WEST OF THE GORAI, AND A NARROWER ONE TO ITS EAST, E.G., THE DISTRICTS OF KUSTHIA, OPJESSORE AND PART OF FARIDPUR AND KHULNA.

5. SALINITY MAIN EFFECT. WITHIN THE LIMITED AREA  
AFFECTED, SALINITY, THE AMOUNT OF SALT IN THE WATER, IS  
THE PRINCIPAL-ADVERSE EFFECT. HERE, THE BDG CASE IS  
STRONGEST. IBRD MISSION RESIDENT AGRICULTURE/WATER  
RESOURCES OFFICER JUDGES THAT DURING THE 1976 DRY SEASON  
SALINE WATERS DID IN FACT PENETRATE UP TO 80 MILES ABOVE  
THEIR EARLIER AVERAGE NORTHERN EXTENT. THIS EFFECT WAS  
LIMITED IN EXTENT, HOWEVER, AND CERTAINLY DID NOT EXTEND  
NORTH AND EAST OF THE ARIAL KHAN RIVER AS SHOWN ON ONE  
WHITE PAPER MAP. SOME VILLAGE WELLS AND HENCE DRINKING  
WATER SUPPLIES, AND IRRIGATION NEAR THE GANGES PARTICULARLY  
BY LOW-LIFT PUMPS, WERE ADVERSELY AFFECTED. (GROUNDWATER  
RECHARGE FOR DEEP TUBE WELLS DEPENDS PRIMARILY ON HIGH SEASON  
FLOOD FLOWS AND RAIN.) IN SUM, THE EFFECT OF SALINITY  
WAS REAL, BUT SMALL AND LIMITED IN AREA.

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6. AGRICULTURE. AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS ARE AGGREGATED  
FROM REPORTS FROM VILLAGES AND LOCAL BDG OFFICIALS THROUGH-  
OUT EACH DISTRICT AND ARE SUBJECT, IN THE BEST OF TIMES,  
TO WIDE VARIATION. WHILE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN SOME  
AREAS WAS DOUBTLESS ADVERSELY AFFECTED, THE ASSERTION

THAT AS MUCH AS 236,000 MT OF RICE WERE LOST IN THE 1976 WINTER (BORO) CROP IS NOT CREDIBLE. TOTAL BORO RICE PRODUCTION IN THOSE DISTRICTS WAS NOT OVER 250,000 MT IN 1975. TOTAL BANGLADESH BORO RICE PRODUCTION WAS 2.5 MMT IN 1975, RISING TO 2.8 MMT IN 1976. SUCH CLAIMS AS THOSE RELATING TO REDUCED OPERATING CAPACITY OF THE PUMPS FOR THE PARTLY USAID-FINANCED GANGES-KOBADAK IRRIGATION SCHEME ARE VERY EXAGGERATED. THE PUMPS WERE DESIGNED TO PROVIDE WATER TO IRRIGATE 200,000 ACRES, BUT COMPLETED CANALS SERVE ONLY 60 TO 75,000 ACRES; HENCE CAPACITY OPERATION IS NOT REQUIRED.

7. INDUSTRY NOT SERIOUSLY AFFECTED. THE PAPER ASSERTS THAT SALINITY REDUCED ELECTRIC POWER GENERATION, CAUSED PAPER MILLS AND THE NEWSPRINT MILL AT KHULNA TO "SUFFER," LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND HAMPERED JUTE PRODUCTION "IN A MAJOR WAY." POWER GENERATION WAS ADVERSELY AFFECTED, BUT AS NOTED IN REPAIR D, APPARENTLY NOT SO SERIOUSLY AS WE HAD FIRST THOUGHT (REPAIR C) AND AS THE WHITE PAPER ASSERTS. THE NEWSPRINT MILL INCURRED SOMEWHAT HIGHER PRODUCTION COSTS DUE TO THE NEED TO BRING FRESH (NON-SALINE) WATER TO THE PLANT BY BARGE, BUT WE BELIEVE THE DECISION TO CLOSE THIS PLANT TEMPORARILY (ON THE EVE THE VISIT OF THE INDIAN TECHNICAL TEAM) WAS TAKEN FOR POLITICAL REASONS AND WITH UNSOLD STOCKS EQUAL TO SIX MONTHS' PRODUCTION WAS CERTAINLY NEAR PAINLESS ECONOMICALLY. THE BDG OFFICIAL IN CHARGE TOLD US IN JULY THAT THE JUTE MILLS IN KHULNA DIVISION (WHICH INCLUDES SOME DISTRICTS OUTSIDE THE SOUTHWEST QUADRANT) ENJOYED THEIR BEST POST-INDEPENDENCE YEAR EVER IN FY 1976.

8. OTHER EFFECTS. WE HAVE NO PARTICULAR EXPERTISE OR INDEPENDENT INFORMATION ON WHICH TO JUDGE THE VALIDITY OF THE UNQUANTIFIABLE EFFECTS CLAIMED BY THE BDG ON SUCH AREAS AS ECOLOGY, OR FORESTRY, AND WE DOUBT THAT ANY GOOD JUDGEMENT COULD BE OFFERED ON ONE YEAR'S EXPERIENCE. WE WOULD CERTAINLY CONSIDER THESE CLAIMS UNPROVE AT PRESENT.

9. CUMULATIVE EFFECT. THE GANGES FLOW AT HARDINGE BRIDGES SHOWS VERY WIDE ANNUAL VARIATIONS, RANGING IN DEPTH FROM 20 FEET TO 48 FEET AND FROM DRY-SEASON FLOWS OF AROUND 60 TO 70,000 CUSECS TO OVER 1.5 MILLION CUSECS IN THE AUGUST/SEPTEMBER FLOOD SEASON. WITH SUMMER FLOWS OF TWENTY-FIVE TIMES THOSE OF A NORMAL DRY SEASON, WE VERY MUCH DOUBT THAT THE DRY-SEASON EFFECTS, SUCH AS INCREASED SALINITY, CARRY OVER CUMULATIVELY FROM ONE YEAR TO THE NEXT AS THE BDG SUGGEST. CERTAINLY, THIS IS UNPROVE ON THE BASIS OF A SINGLE YEAR.

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